The
COMMONWEAL

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Clarifying Foreign Policy

SECRETARY HULL'S address on the foreign policy of the United States is obviously the statement of a sincere and honest man, who believes in human dignity and in what we mean when we use the word democracy—a governmental régime in which the dignity of every citizen is at least theoretically respected. He is justified in pointing out that broad statements of policy, in their application, give rise to difficulties of detail, and that hence the excessively zealous lovers of the principles may often not see the forest for the trees. Of course this is true. It is all very well to insist that different ethnic groups shall have autonomy and shall be free to develop within the framework of their own cultures. But when you get into Eastern Europe, with its various ethnic groups interlaced in a perfect crazy-quilt, the problem of autonomy becomes appalling in its difficulty. Equally difficult, of course, are such decisions as we made at moments of crisis—when we accepted the Badoglio government in Italy, or when we continued our diplomatic relations with Vichy. Both things could be done without betraying the principle Mr. Hull so constantly repeats: that all varieties of fascism must be done away with if the sort of government we want is to continue anywhere in this world. Mr. Hull makes a pretty good case for our policy of dealing with de Gaulle and Badoglio. But one feels, as one reads Mr. Hull, that he interprets the record rather generously.

Thus he tells us regarding the French Committee of National Liberation: "We have fully cooperated with it in all the military phases of the war effort, including the furnishing of arms and equipment to the French armed forces." Taken literally, this is true. But it gives an impression of a harmony which one might desire but which simply does not exist. Then again what he says about Italy seems a very rosy view of what AMG has done: "The declaration regarding Italy made at Moscow . . . confirmed the policy initiated by the British and American Governments that the Italian Government shall be made more democratic by the introduction of representatives of those sections of the Italian people who have always opposed fascism; that all institutions and organizations created by the fascist régime shall be suppressed; that all fascists or pro-fascist elements shall be removed from the administration and from the institutions and organizations of a public character; and that democratic organs of local governments shall be created. . . . This policy has been and is being carried out. Only that part which calls for the introduction into the central government of more democratic elements has not yet been put into effect." In the light of trustworthy reports from Italy, one may be permitted to wonder how much these excellent main lines of policy have been more honored in the breach than in the observance.

We accept Mr. Hull's assurance: "Our foreign policy is comprehensive, is stable and is known to all men. As the President has said, neither he nor I have made or will make any secret agreement or commitment, political or financial." But accepting this assurance would be far easier were the specific application of the fine general directives stated by Mr. Hull more clearly consonant with those directives. Let us hope that in future they will be.

Christian Russia

NONE of the events of recent months has in any way weakened our contention, now nearly two years old, that the Kremlin has decided to enlist in its support the Orthodox Christians of Russia. The decision seems more and more to be a permanent and considered change in policy, and it conforms with the broad return to the policies of Czarist days which has been so conspicuous an aspect of recent Russian performance. Of course it has its ludicrous side. We hear of a debate in a Connecticut city between a Catholic priest and an official Soviet representative on the subject of the relations between the Vatican and Moscow. The priest based his discussion of the question on a careful political and historical analysis; the Soviet

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official argued exclusively from Orthodox theology, as a lay member of the Orthodox Church. Then a few days ago we suddenly find the Patriarch Sergius publishing an article in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in which he rehearses all the old arguments of the Orthodox against the Pope, not as Patriarch of the West, but as Vicar of Christ. The Soviet line seems now to include a thorough knowledge of traditional Orthodox theology, which must be disconcerting to those who would like still to view it as something out-and-out godless.

Of course it is very easy to regard all this with cynicism and to insist that it is prompted by expediency and not in the least by a sudden access of religious feeling on the part of Mr. Stalin and his friends. A certain amount of cynicism is forgivable, but we must be careful. Perhaps the heads of the Soviet State still hanker after atheism, but they have made it possible for Russians to be Christians—not only made it possible, but even encouraged it by giving stable religious authority to the Orthodox Church and by equating once again loyalty to Russia with loyalty to Orthodoxy. This means that millions of Russians are free to be good and even saintly Christians, and we must fully expect that millions of them will take advantage of their new freedom. In the end we may find ourselves confronting a Russia in which there are proportionately more believing Christians than there are in the nations of the West, and our cynicism will have been a grave sin against charity.

Working Toward an Abundance Economy

IT IS difficult conclusively to appraise the eighteen months' achievement of the Committee for Economic Development, which has now interested some 40,000 American business men the nation over in the problem of keeping steam up in American industry after the war. To drive home the idea that our national goals should be an annual production of 140-odd billion dollars' worth of goods and services, and peace-time employment of 55 to 60 million men is to perform a real service. It sets people thinking in the only possible constructive direction.

At the outset the committee's emphasis was all on the problems of the small enterprise, which still employs about half the country's workers. And the approach has been through specific localities, where potential production and employment have been surveyed at their very source. There has been, throughout, a genial attitude on the part of CED executives—friendliness toward labor, the farmer, the public and the government.

Listening to the speeches of the industrial and business leaders who have assumed the considerable responsibility which the committee's work entails—and reading CED literature—it is difficult to tell how far the project has progressed up to this moment. It is clear that exceedingly competent research is now in process. Thousands of useful contacts have been made and hundreds of American communities have been encouraged to begin now a constructive study of the economic situation they will have to face once the war is over. The question is, how much of all this is talk and how much can be rightly considered community and regional planning in the blueprint stage? Have things reached a point where other agencies can lull themselves to inactivity in this area on the theory that the CED has the country organized for immediate transformation into peacetime production? The CED itself does not make this claim.

In recent months there seems to be less emphasis on keeping small enterprises going after the war and making them the spearhead of postwar economic expansion in the committee's literature. It is hard to overlook the fact that there is a real conflict between big and little business, that the small enterprises have steadily been losing ground. (They have been particularly hard hit by the concentration of war orders in the bigger corporations.) The term, "free enterprise" now occurs more frequently in CED talk, although there is little pretense that the problem is merely one of returning to *laissez-faire*. And there is considerable pressure for a new tax program that will insure the greatest opportunity for national economic expansion. Much depends on what that means. The picture is not a clear one. But one thing is certain. It would be a mistake to leave to any one group of Americans, no matter how disinterested they may appear, the task of planning our postwar reconstruction. Who can get far enough away from his background and professional vital interests to view the national scene as a whole? Reconstruction is a task in which every interest must have a voice.

Demilitarization of Rome

"I THEREFORE respectfully suggest that you propose a special commission composed of two or more representatives of the United Nations and an equal number of military representatives of the enemy, with the Pope as impartial chairman, to arrange the demilitarization of Rome." This is from a letter written April 7, 1944, by Senator Styles Bridges, to the President.

As we have said before, the Germans have made some sort of gesture toward making Rome an open city, and now here is an American Senator making a proposal which is precise, simple and concrete. Owing to military circumstances there still is time to settle the question of Rome, but we must negotiate this question with the enemy before military circumstances make negotiations impossible. Mark the date of Senator Bridges's letter. Posterity will note the date on which action about it is taken.

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Solange

SOME OF these people of course you knew that if a war came they would be in trouble. No matter what papers they had they would be in trouble because they had come to France from somewhere else.

In a back room on the floor above the village grocery store which was called the Star of the Alps there lived an old Russian lady and of course she could be expected to have her troubles if war came because there is no use in being too much of a lady, a foreign lady, when all the cousins you knew in one administration or another in Saint Petersburg were scattered all over the world or were dead. She had no money but she had a large portfolio of very terrible water colors of Capri, Sorrento, the Tarantella, and Vesuvius in eruption with a red cloud over the blue sea, and the way a Russian lady would consider naturally these water colors was that they could not be sold one by one, so that she could buy some groceries from the Star of the Alps, but that they must be exhibited sometime, somewhere, in a great city, and that the proceeds of the sale would provide a capital on which she could live for the rest of her days. The Russian lady spoke several languages, including German; she talked aloud to herself on the street: and when the worry about the war drew close the village people began to worry about the old lady and she, whom long experience of varied exile had rendered sensitive to such movements of popular feeling, began to worry about the possibility of moving from this French village to Capetown in South Africa, in which city a contemporary of hers with whom she was in correspondence had found peace remote from any probability of any war. This project involved a great deal of official paper work for the Russian lady and before the war came she had departed on a sort of paper chase which led her first to the Sous-Préfecture—a trip on foot of some ten miles—and then to the Préfecture—to get there and back it took a day in the train—and then, packing her belongings, the trail led on to Lyons where there were various foreign consulates but not enough of them, and then to Marseilles which possessed a full assortment, and when war was declared there was no one in the village who cared whether or not the Russian lady had been a spy, whether or not the Russian lady was on a P and O liner traveling to Capetown or was stuck in Marseilles.

Further up the main street of the village there was a sort of Frenchman or a German or a Swiss who was considered also to be possibly an American because he talked all the time about Brooklyn, and who sold alarm clocks and radios when he was in his shop, which was practically never. His uncertain status which would have caused him worry when war came was solved happily enough when he made one trip too many to Geneva and was put in jail as a smuggler who had attempted to undermine the century-old Geneva industry of watch-making.

Then there were Simone, Lucienne, Odette Raymonde and their little brother André; there was no trouble about them; they were very beautiful children with a natural and exquisite grace (Lucienne was eight and she stood in the library with the rows of books on the shelves and the paintings on the walls and she said "how beautiful the things are in the house"); the only trouble with these four children was a matter of undernourishment, and no clothes and no care and the fact that they would be a burden on the charitable funds the Mayor had at his disposal for the poor if at some time in the future he might decide to assist them. And this he found difficult to do because the parents were Swiss. Once again a kind destiny intervened to solve the problem of who was to care for them, a problem which would have become even more difficult had it been left pending until war reached the village. The mother was caught stealing and so the family was returned to its native canton of Fribourg in Switzerland.

So that by the time the war came the village had no longer the Russian lady, nor the Brooklyn smuggler, nor the famished and beautiful alien children; the gypsy wagons and the tramps no longer came to the village; the village was a French village freed of any extraneous elements, prepared to suffer the darkest future—it was dark what came—without anyone in its midst who uncertainly belonged.

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Beneath the trees in the park of the chateau in the summer just before the war Jacqueline and Claude, the daughters of the house, walked with their friend Solange. Well, there would be committees and canteen work or work in the hospitals and the three girls made all the plans girls make when war is very near. Three French girls in a garden with the fountain playing and the sunlight and then the shade of the trees. Solange was leaving for Paris.

The Germans came to Paris and to the village. And then for a time we did not know what was happening in France but it became evident that many of the French were not submitting to German rule. The Germans stayed in France and when those French who did not submit to them were caught they were punished. That still was war; the war was going on. The French were French; the Germans were Germans. The French counted themselves. But the Germans took the French girl Solange to Poland. They said she was Jewish not French. The French know otherwise.

C. G. PAULDING.

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The Cooley Bill

A requiem for rural rehabilitation

Rural Observer

THE LONG fight to transfer to America's monopoly-minded big growers lands and heritage, stock and equipment—almost, indeed, the bodies and souls—of our farm folk has reached a climax with the referring of House Resolution 4384 to the House Committee on Agriculture.

Drawn by the Cooley Committee, which has spent a year investigating and attacking the Farm Security Administration's efforts to help low-income farmers, the bill is a compromise—a product of pressure from monopolistic groups on one side and the crying need of small farmers on the other.

Despite legislative concessions calculated to end family farming slowly but surely by economic strangulation, the American Farm Bureau Federation still is dissatisfied with the bill. Demanding death for rural rehabilitation, the monopolists are asking the Agriculture Committee to incorporate their demands in the legislation.

HR 4384 abolishes the Farm Security Administration, which for years has afforded credit to small farmers who could not obtain credit elsewhere. It curtails or ends outright the technical farm and home management counsel which Farm Security gave to those needing help. It restricts small farmers' cooperatives, and thereby reduces the small farmers' only hope of buying and selling economically enough to compete with big growers. It fails to mention continuation of the FSA Medical Care Program—under which small farmers pooled their annual medical bills, pro-rating the costs and guaranteeing every member family hospital and doctor care at a nominal figure. Above all, it leaves open avenues to political control of the small farmer by pressure groups which have been trying for years to exterminate him economically, rub him out of competition with factory farmers and industrialize agriculture by giving a few large landholders life and death powers over the mass of the rural population.

The word "rehabilitation" is mentioned frequently in the bill, but only in connection with the repealing of powers from agencies that are being abolished. The thousands of words in the bill do not hint that any further effort will be made to rehabilitate the forgotten folk of the nation's backhill areas.

Farm Security Administration was a descriptive term. It afforded farmers a measure of security against the vagaries of our economics, against disasters described as "acts of God," against further social and spiritual and intellectual decay. It could not offer security, however, against the greedy, grabbing pressure exercised by power politicians.

Farm Security is being replaced by an equally descriptive organization under HR 4384—"The Farmers' Home Corporation." We have Orphans Homes, and Homes for the Aged, and Old Soldiers' Homes. We have Homes for the Incurable, Homes for Wayward Youth. Now we have a Farmers' Home operated by a corporate body. And we can well expect that discipline will be quite as rigid as in Orphans,' Old Folks', Incurables' and other Homes. The legislation provides political and economic power sufficient to keep our rural population perfectly *gleichschaltet* with the ambitions of the lords of the land.

HR 4384, in activating the old, unused and forgotten "Farmers' Home Corporation," bequeathes to it many of the functions of Farm Security, the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporations and the Emergency Seed and Feed Loan section of the Farm Credit Administration. The Farmers' Home Corporation can make 40-year loans to farm owners, tenants, sharecroppers and workers for the purchase of farms. It can make loans to citizens "for the purchase of livestock, farm equipment and supplies, other farm needs, the refinancing of indebtedness and family subsistence." Many of these loans are to be Government-insured and routed through the banks, affording bankers five percent interest but asking them to assume no risk. The bill puts it this way: "The corporation may make, service or collect loans either directly or through the agency of any qualified institution (public or private) on such basis of compensation or reciprocal services as the Corporation may prescribe or provide." Thus the taxpayer is placed in the position of giving banks a 5 percent "kickback" for the banks' permission for the Government to make loans to farmers with whom the banks refuse to deal directly.

The Bill says loans may be made for subsistence. Period. What is subsistence? In this case it will

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be whatever those who control FHC make it. If that control follows the feelings of the Cooley Committee, it is safe to assume that loans can not include sums for payment of poll taxes, warm clothing for children, school supplies, house paint and repairs, church contributions, occasional amusements, nutritious food, current periodicals and books and other essentials of equal opportunity, common charity and social decency. And the unfortunate part of this is that if the lending agency makes no provision in its farm and home plans for these items, the family almost certainly will be denied them. Plans and budgets are followed pretty closely in supervised credit.

Most serious of several unbusinesslike flaws in the bill is a provision for "the supervision of borrowers as the Corporation may deem necessary to protect its interests." Supervision has been the keynote of Farm Security success. Through it, more than a million FSA borrowers have been able to regain their feet financially. But that supervision was strictly in the interests of the borrower. Under the present wording of HR 4384, it is doubtful what, if any, supervision would be afforded borrowers. It is certain that all taxpayers' moneys loaned to Farm Security's bad credit risks would be drained off rapidly unless the agency were allowed to improve the farming and home-making skills of borrowers. If the purpose of the legislation is to liquidate small farmers, it could not be done more effectively than by allowing them to accumulate debts without giving them the ability to repay.

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The bill states that the Corporation "shall make no loan to any Corporation or cooperative association." A clause prohibiting specifically the use of loans to participate in cooperatives proved too raw and was withdrawn before printing. As it stands now, small farmers cannot use Government help in organizing their own cooperatives. They must rely upon the true and false cooperatives run by bigger farmers, frequently for the private profit of a few individuals.

Loans under the new legislation are limited to $2,500; and a $3,500 ceiling is set upon indebtedness. This debt limit is far too low for farmers in the better-producing agricultural areas of the country, particularly in dairy regions, the Maine potato country, rich farm lands on the Pacific Coast and in truck crop areas which annually require a large outlay of cash.

Worse than the $3,500 restriction, however, is a clause providing that "the term of any such operating loan, including renewals and extensions, shall not exceed five years from the date the loan was originally made." Unless this is revised, a decade-long depression would pauperize borrowers, destroy their credit and give them neither means nor hope of repaying their obligations.

The proposed legislation makes no provision for grants or even for authority for Congress to appropriate funds for grants. In event of a disaster wrought by sun, wind, flood, disease or pestilence, farmers would be irreparably damaged and helpless. Even the loans, limited to $3,500 *in toto*, would be of scant help in many disaster areas.

The legislation emasculates the unique "variable payment" plan, so successfully operated by FSA in helping sharecroppers and others buy farms. Under FSA's plan, borrowers repaid the Government less than scheduled amounts in bad years and more in good years. The new legislation would allow borrowers to over-pay in good years but never, even in bad years, allow repayments to fall below the accrued amount due. This would be excellent only if Congress could rule the weather, prevent droughts and floods and plant disease. But as long as these matters are under the control of a higher authority—dependent upon Congress neither for appropriations nor legislative approval—natural causes will furnish good and sufficient reason for farmers' debt defaults.

The bill considers the brave new world which will emerge from the war. It gives preference to veterans in farm ownership loans, provided they "meet the requirements of rules and regulations prescribed by the Corporation as to industry, experience, character and other assurances of success as farmers." None of the normal restrictions is waived, however. In other words, upon proper presentation of their honorable discharge and a nickel, the veterans are entitled to one ride on the subway.

The bill strikes a mighty blow against America's helpless, humble migrant workers—the disinherited darkies of the South, the hoboes of the West, the men, women and children who once owned or rented farms but who in agriculture's 40-year decline were set adrift. HR 4384 abolishes FSA's migratory labor camps, which afforded these folk the only homes, the only social life, the only modern conveniences and medical care they had ever known. They are to be sold within six months after the end of the war, along with farm projects on which impoverished families found subsistence and sanctuary during the depression decade.

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Obscure points in the bill indicate a surrender to the American Farm Bureau Federation. AFBF long ago captured the Agricultural Extension Services in most of the states. By contributing less than $1,000,000 a year—as against $18,000,000 and more put up by the Federal Government—AFBF uses Extension Service's mammoth field forces to solicit Farm Bureau memberships, to

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disseminate its anti-labor and anti-administration propaganda, and to do other odd and dirty jobs for AFBF pressure politicians. Now the AFBF is seeking to capture the Farmers' Home Corporation to serve its political ends. And the Cooley Committee has bowed to some extent to AFBF pressure. Civil service protection and requirements are specifically waived for the FHC.

The bill provides that Farmers' Home Corporation county committees "shall meet on the call of the county agricultural Extension agent in the county or on the call of such other person as the Corporation may designate." It also says that the county committees shall "examine applications (filed with the county agricultural Extension agent in the county or with such other person as the Corporation may designate) of persons desiring to obtain the assistance of the Corporation in financing the acquisition of farms or farming operations."

Some people consider the AFBF as fascist in its long fight to abolish Farm Security's help to farmers and farm workers, in its vicious efforts to raise food prices to inflationary levels, in its incessant hate propaganda against labor, in its evil alliance with the National Association of Manufacturers, American Bankers Association, US Chamber of Commerce and other big business pressure groups. These people would not like to see the AFBF gain further domination of our rural population by controlling, through Extension Service, the credit, supervisory assistance, education, medical care and other essentials of farm operation and home living.

In order to give complete control of the new program to the AFBF-dominated Extension Service, ties with the Federal Government had to be broken. So the bill provides for FHC state and county offices but eliminates regional offices. There can be only one reason for this move, of course. And that is to set the new program under the Farm Bureau and biggest growers in each state and each county without recourse to the Federal Government. This will be an expensive innovation, inasmuch as the engineering, budget, loan and collection, personnel and other administrative and service facilities which once served as many as eleven states through regional offices now must be established in each state.

For the same reason information offices, which publish news of the Corporation's activities, can be created only "when funds are appropriated by the Congress." The Corporation, under AFBF control, probably would prefer to keep quiet about its activities . . . or leave it to Extension's propaganda mill for expert political treatment.

Otherwise, the bill is not so bad. Funds, while hardly ample, are bigger than FSA has had to work with. The bill establishes revolving funds, which make unnecessary annual appeals to the meager mercies of Congress for an appropriation for the common man.

But truly to help the rural population, to perpetuate family farming as an American institution, the AFBF must be kicked bodily out of the picture; FSA-type rehabilitation and supervision must be written into the bill; debt restrictions should be left to the discretion of county committees of farmers; cooperatives, including medical care associations, should be provided for; and the agency should remain free from political influence and domination by maintaining its regional offices.

This legislation affects urban people as well as farmers. It should be called to the careful attention of city Congressmen; so that they may protect their country from an invasion of tyranny via the rural areas of America.

The Old Fox Hunter

The danger of leveling

J. L. Benvenisti

IT IS the misfortune of Britain that so many of her institutions are meanly admired and even more meanly derided, and I am not certain that I am not beginning to dislike the derision the more of the two. At least the man who meanly and snobbishly admires certain traditional classes in England, the man who meanly respects mere titles and lineage, does little more than make himself ridiculous. But the man who derides can do so with much less risk to his intellectual dignity, for he has ideological fashion on his side.

It is this consideration that has largely moved me to write this article, for I suppose I am coming forward here, in a vague sort of way, as a defender of all those rather decent traditional sort of people in Britain, titled and untitled, who seem sometimes to excite a not too kindly ribaldry from a certain kind of American. Heaven knows that

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many of them are often pretty tiresome. Indeed, no one who knows England could possibly overestimate how dull, stupid and exasperating some of them can be. But when we have said that, we have said the worst that can be said of the worst of them, and not only is the best that can be said of the best of them a very big best, but there is among these people a general level of graciousness and decency which makes me feel that we shall be poorer if they are destroyed.

But that alone would be an insufficient reason for devoting so much space to the matter. Gracious and kindly institutions have perished before, and the world has recovered from its loss. But there is a powerful reason impelling me in this matter which may perhaps strike the reader as somewhat paradoxical. I am defending an aristocracy because I am a democrat, for being a democrat means, if it means anything, that I believe in the right of the individual to be himself, and to follow his tastes in the ordering of his life and the choice of his friends—but you will see what I am driving at in a moment.

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When I was in Scotland last September I had occasion to visit a number of the so-called "old Scottish castles," now for the most part serving as hospitals. They are most of them, as a matter of fact, not particularly old, having largely been built in the reign of Queen Victoria the Good, when the art of architecture had fallen to a quite abominably low level. Generally they are large gloomy buildings stuck on the top of a tall hill, and they have a habit of breaking out toward the roof in a sort of rash of meaningless turrets, so that the whole effect was well described by a companion of mine who declared that they appeared to have been designed by a drunken German after witnessing a succession of Walt Disney films.

I know that the fact that in almost every case the owners of these castles have voluntarily handed them over as auxiliary hospitals no longer carries much weight with people who maintain that they never had any right to possess them in the first place. But the fact remains that they *have* handed them over. I found case after case where the family had done this and was living in a little rented house near their estate, or had retired into a couple of rooms and let the troops have the run of the rest of the place. On such occasions the owner of the castle has a sort of tacitly conceded authority, and the whole institution is run on the basis of a sort of kindly paternalism that makes the honest radical foam at the mouth and roll his eyes. In the main I sympathize with the radical, because I believe this kind of thing would be completely unbearable outside Britain, but in Britain in some mysterious way it works.

It was in one of these places that I witnessed a little scene which somehow I believe you could only see and understand in a British setting. I had come panting up the inevitable hill to give what is still forbiddingly called a "lecture" to the men, and before starting it I was very hospitably entertained by the family at tea (they all came up afterwards to hear me talk, accompanied by the largest bull-dog that I have ever seen, which snored deafeningly through the whole procedure, but which nobody seemed to mind). Well, among the patients in the hospital was a young lout of fourteen, one of the local village boys, who had been taken in there, since it was now the nearest place where hospital facilities were available, and while I was at tea the little son of the house, aged eight, came in rubbing his head. When asked what was the matter he said that Donald—this was the young brute's name—had hit him on the head with a croquet mallet. He could obviously not have hit him very hard, and perhaps it wasn't a croquet mallet, but undoubtedly he had cracked him on the head, and I gathered that he was rather in the habit of doing this. When the little chap explained what was the matter, there was a sort of pained silence round the table, and the hostess said firmly but not unkindly, "This is really going too far, I shall have to speak to Donald," and then I knew I was in Britain, and I saw in my mind's eye the scene of Donald being "spoken to" and knew exactly what would take place. I knew that at the end of that interview Donald would come out of that room with tears streaming from his eyes and holding an enormous piece of cake in his hand. It is the way things are done in this country, and despite all the radicals may say, there are many worse ways of doing them.

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But may I tell of yet another meeting that somehow fits into all this picture with a curious aptness of its own. I believe I told in a previous article of the distant buried civilization of which I learned in Scotland. Well, by a curious coincidence my duties led me straight from one buried civilization to another, and scarcely had I returned from Scotland than I was switched over to Suffolk.

Suffolk is, I think, my favorite among all the British counties. It is a wheat and cattle country of gently undulating contours and with a great wealth of elm trees lining its roads and old unspoiled shaded villages in the hollows. Yet these villages are, for the most part, an aftergrowth, and in almost every case you are struck by the great size of the pre-Reformation parish churches, which were obviously built for much larger communities. The explanation is that here in medieval times was the great center of the wool trade, when wool was one of Britain's staple exports, and it was in this part of the world that the wool was grown, spun, and, I think, in many cases woven;

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and most of these great churches were built and endowed by the great wool merchants, when these localities were probably more populous than they are today.

The little Suffolk town, however, to which I was sent had certain other associations for me, for here twenty-eight years ago, when I was a very green and very temporary gunnery officer in the last war, my battery had done its training. I asked round the town if anybody remembered us, and found an old chemist who knew the name of my commanding officer. But there was one person in particular I wanted to see. He was the local doctor, for it was he who had taken me under his wing in those days when I first learnt the mysteries of fox hunting.

Dr. X. acted at that time as our regimental doctor, but his professional duties did not seem to prevent him from hunting two days a week. He was frequently in our mess, and I remember him chiefly because of a speech he made at our Christmas dinner, a speech for which an observation of my own had provided the clue.

I had just had my first run with hounds and said that, though I had thoroughly enjoyed myself, I feared that I should never learn to make the right noises at the right time, and indeed I never have, for there are occasions in a British fox hunt which call for a specialized kind of shriek, when the fox is viewed or performs some other maneuver, and these have baffled me ever since. My remark had struck the doctor as enormously funny and he ended his speech, which needless to say was on the glories of hunting, by saying that he hoped we would all learn to ride straight and also to make the right noises at the right time, and at this point the dear gentleman became completely speechless at his own joke.

As I write these lines I wonder vaguely how they will strike an American reader who, I suppose, has seen innumerable sporting prints of a fox hunt, and visualizes a cavalcade of haughty aristocrats in pink coats, presumably wearing monocles. I can assure him that it isn't in the least like that and never has been. There were on this occasion, at any rate, remarkably few pink coats, and I certainly remember no monocles. Indeed my chief recollections of that first day's hunting are two. One is of some Canadian troopers who came along and frightened the field nearly out of its wits by jumping gates four abreast, and the other is of a veritable swarm of rough looking farmers who made up the greater part of the hunt; and, even after all this time, I have the memory of one old bearded farmer sitting on his horse under a tree, when the hounds had lost the scent, and eating positively incredible amounts of pudding out of a red handkerchief.

And so when I came back to that Suffolk town it was not unnatural that Dr. X was one of the first people that I should ask about. I heard that he was still alive; that after the end of the last war he had become Master of Hounds, but that an old accident in the hunting field had now found him out and that he had recently had one leg amputated. I found him living some miles away from the town in a small one-storey house. It was a minute or two before he could place me, and then his old face lit up and he knew who I was, and immediately he began to talk about hunting as though there were nothing else to talk about in the world.

He told me that the sport had fallen on evil days. Yes, the hunt was still going, but nobody now seemed to have the time or the money, and (here he lowered his voice as gallantry struggled with despair) the pack was hunted by a lady M. F. H. I had a vision for the moment of that melancholy procession, a sort of ghostly chase sweeping through the mists and scaring the country folk, an unnatural portent like Herne the Hunter.

But the old man was still hopeful. "It will come back," he said. "There are a lot of chaps that want to down hunting, but too many people round here like it; it will come back." Before I left him I said how glad I was to see him looking so fit and well preserved. I said that he had obviously lived a good and happy life, and then his old eyes lit up and he made one of those innocent-seeming little remarks that are nevertheless capable of turning a certain type of man, when he hears them, from a rational and peaceable human being into a demon raving for vengeance and blood, a remark that explains to the initiated why a certain kind of man wants to destroy fox hunting and all that goes with it. He said: "Yes, sixty-two topping seasons, sixty-two topping seasons."

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Now, I can quite understand people of a certain kind saying that this remark proved the utter indefensibleness of this man's whole existence. Here he was, an old man who had consumed the fruits of the earth, perhaps even committed the ghastly crime of enjoying a little unearned income, and all that he had done during his seventy-odd years of life was to get on a horse several times a week and gallop after some dogs that were chasing a fox. And yet I am prepared to assert, and to do so with some vehemence, that this man was anything but indefensible, that he was in point of fact very defensible indeed. For the fact is that the fox-hunt, of which in these parts he had for so long been the presiding genius, is much more than a sport. It is a social ritual binding together a whole countryside with invisible bonds of neighborliness and charity.

Whether the old doctor had "helped to make the world a better place," as the accursed phrase

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goes, I do not profess to know. But I am quite certain that without him and his understanding love of beast and bird and field, and all the things that were bound up with the lives of the people who lived around him, this little part of the world would have been a much poorer place than it actually was.

I saw the old boy next day from a distance as he was driving into the town in a very ancient looking phaeton and it was "Hello, George," to this man, and "Hello, Tom," to that. He did not drive ten yards without hailing somebody. There was, it is true, a certain deference with which Tom and George acknowledged these salutes, and I know this is the kind of social atmosphere which some people cannot stand at any price whatever. Even Chesterton once inveighed against it, and said bitterly that what for years had kept the British ruling class going was asking after people's rheumatism. I am quite certain that if there is one thing that this old fox-hunting doctor had done all his life, it was to ask about people's rheumatism. Well, I have never been able to see that asking about people's rheumatism was a crime, and it seems to me that the man who makes a habit of asking about other people's rheumatism is distinctly preferable to that of the man whose view is obviously that other people's rheumatism can go and chase itself.

Of course the real gravamen of the hostility against all this kind of thing is that these people are supposed to have left undone much that they might have done, that they have not rooted vociferously for measures to cure unemployment, infant mortality and so on, and have sought to cover up these shortcomings by a simulated preoccupation with the uric acidity of the lower income groups. But it is precisely here that I fail to see what it is that people like the old doctor are supposed to have been able to do which could not have been equally well done by any farm laborer or blacksmith. For the very first thing we are going to do if we are going to get rid of these scourges (I mean unemployment—not, unfortunately, rheumatism) is to think out the general principles of action, and that is something, which is not only not being done anywhere by the rank and file of the Left, it is only too rarely being done by those elements of the Left who have certainly got the leisure and the opportunity to make some use of their brains. With all its imperfections Britain is really a democracy, which means that the informed will of the people really does prevail if only the people condescend to have an informed will, and if there is in Britain still much left undone which might be done, it is because, as in every other of the greater democracies, there is a complete absence among the mass of people of any understanding of the means by which certain ends might be secured.

I speak with some authority here, for my experience as an Army lecturer has taught me at least this, if it has taught me nothing else. Thus I have been lecturing for some time now to troops on the subject of post-war employment, and I know how novel, not to say flabbergasting, to them is even such an essentially simple, and by now almost orthodox, idea as the equation of savings and investment by public borrowing. There is no question at all any longer that mass unemployment can be abolished by this method, if we are determined to abolish it, and could indeed have been abolished any time during these last twenty years; and if this has not come about it is because the great mass of people have never bothered to give any real attention to the problem of means.

What is the explanation of this paradox? Surely it is to be found in the fact that it is a great deal easier to hate than to think, and that the vested political interests of the day are encouraging people more and more to take the line of least resistance; and so people believe that they can get rid of their troubles by execrating and eliminating a particular social type, instead of by sitting down and using their brains. And so it is that after half a century of political agitation, in which enough cheap literature has been published to sink the entire navies of the world, the happy cry of "Down with the Capitalists" seems still to represent the limit of what the average man is capable of in the way of political and economic wisdom.

And so back to my old fox-hunter. I am growing more and more to suspect that the reiterated accusation that men like my old fox-hunter have failed in their responsibilities is really nothing but a cover for something very different and very much uglier. What is behind it is the feeling: "He is not our sort of man. His habits are not our habits, so what right has he to walk the face of the earth?" and though that attitude of mind is probably rarer in Britain than in any other country, I should be lying if I denied its existence.

The supreme irony of all this is that the people who are encouraging this sort of thing tend to pride themselves on being democratic. Yet that much abused word "democracy," in so far as it means anything, means, as I have already pointed out, letting people be themselves, letting them lead their own lives and associate with friends of their own choosing—yes, even such moral lepers as happen to be a little better off than we are.

I begin to see a danger in all this. At present it is a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, but it is already full of potential menace. It is that behind this plethora of fine phrases about democracy, the age of the common man, and the rest of it, there may be growing up something like a new kind of totalitarianism, capitalizing on ignorance and resentment, and aiming at the elimination of all who do not conform to a certain standard type. It

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begins with the elimination of men like my fox-hunter; it ends with the massacre of the artist, the thinker, of anything with an individuality of its own.

I think that before you in America accept the caricatures of the now impoverished landed gentry of Britain at their face value you might reflect for a moment what is behind it all. For what is behind it is the drive to a new kind of tyranny which is the negation of everything we profess to be fighting for.

What Private Relief Can Do after the War

JAMES WOOD JOHNSON

FOR relief work in a liberated Europe, it is now recognized that some of the most difficult problems can best be solved by private relief agencies; and yet the difficulties of planning by such organizations have become so great that already a number of them have formed the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Relief, the purpose of which is to pool ideas and plans so that each organization may form its projects in accordance with its special field. At present the following organizations have become members of this Council: International Rescue and Relief Committee, Greek War Relief Association, American Friends Service Committee, National Catholic Welfare Conference, American Committee for Christian Refugees, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Near East Foundation, National Board YWCA, International Committee YMCA, American ORT Federation, Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, Unitarian Service Committee, Mennonite Central Committee, International Migration Service, Brethren Service Committee.

Yet beyond sharing views and discussing specialized fields of activity, these and other agencies are finding that they are greatly hampered in planning by some of the present regulations. They are all governed by the War Relief Control Board, under the rulings of which they are not permitted to make public appeals concerning their needs or to go before the people with their special problems. They also come under the regulation making it necessary to obtain a State Department permit to send funds or supplies outside of the country, which permit may be withdrawn if an agency publicizes its problems without permission. Then, too, many agencies are grouped within the National War Fund, and so are limited to participation in the annual drive for the general objective of "Relief." Even those not a part of this War Fund are obligated not to make appeals for funds for their special purposes without permission, and only in ways and at times that cannot interfere with the War Fund's drive. It is quite true that the simplification of fund-raising is desirable in war time; but some of the organizations now a part of the War Fund are allotted funds, not on the basis of future requirements, but on that of the figures of the previous year's receipts.

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What can private relief organizations do better than other agencies? The American and British organizations that will be the most welcome in liberated Europe will be, with few exceptions, those which will send very few of their own workers abroad, and which will work with and through the charitable and humanitarian private agencies native to the various countries. They will thus not only do efficient work, but they will also help to bring about a spirit of common understanding and sympathy. Private aid supplied in this manner will provide the difference between existence and life, because it will not be based upon the minimum for existence, but upon adding to the minimum. Since private aid deals with special and local needs, it helps to maintain personality, without which there is little taste in life for the human being. Private aid is thus of great moral value, since it fosters an expression of union and entente between men. UNRRA's task, important and indispensable as it will be in many countries, especially those of Eastern Europe and the Near East, is necessarily temporary, while private aid will be needed much longer.

Some of the problems in a liberated Europe will particularly require the warmth and devotion that only private aid can give. One such problem, perhaps the greatest of all, will be the social rehabilitation of Europe's youth. Because of the misery they have suffered, many children have progressed far toward the hate that is increasingly possessing all Europe. Some have already gone far in the direction of the destructive aggressiveness, the intolerance and the violence that lead straight to new and perhaps worse ideologies. With their long years of privation—loss of homes, destruction of schools, daily examples of death, hunger and cold, bombings and deportations—and with all the primitive instincts of hate and violence given free rein, we must realize what kind of moral values (if we can call them moral) the children of Europe are likely to adopt. The picture looks still darker when we consider the exhaustion of the older generation, their increasing neuroses, their helpless apathy. Certainly we have no right to close our eyes to the consequences and implications. The coming generation in Europe may easily upset all our plans and formulas for a future peace, however well-conceived. Consequently it is our responsibility and our duty to be prepared to face this danger, which, unless offset, is not just a possibility, but rather a probability. To count

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upon armed force to keep the coming generation within the spirit of our civilization is naïve. Armed force cannot be applied against children. Thus the social rehabilitation of the youth of Europe is the greatest and surest means of winning this youth to the ideals of peace and the values of civilization.

One of the most effective means of preventing growing children's becoming schooled in hatred is personal contact through aid given by persons inspired with love of their fellow men. The children of Europe will above all need much heart on the part of those who seek to help them. They will not ask for charity, but they will respond to genuine feeling—except in the case of those (a minority, I hope) who have already progressed so far along the road to hate that they can only despise kindness as weakness.

In workers' quarters in Lyons during 1941, I visited a number of families several times, sometimes in the company of hospital aids, sometimes with two Sisters of the Assumption, who in France fulfill the functions of our visiting nurses. I saw how even pitifully insufficient help, given from the heart and with resulting mutual attraction, could rekindle affection and hope in children in whom I had before seen only cold and aloof hostility.

Our own private relief agencies working in this manner through private European organizations can deal with such important questions as the restitution of broken families, the creation of foster homes for innumerable war orphans (for which purpose special funds will be required), particular attention to the needs of destitute children, clinics for the recovery of mothers weakened by hunger and misery. They can thus eliminate many causes of juvenile immorality, delinquency and criminality; and this has to be done if the very idea of relief is not to be a mockery.

The private organizations in the countries to be liberated, even those that have national scope, have no governmental ties. In France, for instance, there are the French Red Cross, the Secours National and numerous small groups for the care of mothers and children, all entirely independent. In addition there are the various religious orders—the Sisters of Charity, the Petites Soeurs de l'Assomption, the Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul, the Petites Soeurs des Pauvres, all performing important service in the life of the home, the hospital, and the clinic. Many of these orders have houses here and in England.

In the United States the present regulations governing private relief agencies, while they simplify fund raising and prevent duplication and abuses, have a reverse side. They take away the stimulant of creating new organizations with new and special purposes. Since, moreover, all needs are now grouped under one word, "relief," the real needs, which in separate countries are different and change at different periods, are not vivid to the people of America—who, after all, are the only backers of all American private relief organizations. This means that there is now a gap between the people and the private agencies.

This gap may lead in the end to the bureaucratization of organizations and deal a hard blow to the very spirit of private or people's relief which these organizations represent. The centralization of private relief, with an anonymous aim of just relief, does not explain to the people the specific cases they want to know about. Some persons, for example, are most responsive to the needs of children, while others respond more wholeheartedly to those of old people, or to medical requirements to prevent epidemics, or to the special needs of war orphans, the rebuilding of schools, the requirements of religious charitable organizations. The unknown quantity that is termed "relief" lacks the poignancy of an appeal for a concrete purpose. It also lacks the spontaneity of response to such an appeal.

This gap, furthermore, will reduce the effectiveness as well as the scope of private aid, since it will diminish the amount of money and supplies that people would be willing to provide for it. Hence we lack necessary preparedness for the future, as can be seen in the absence of effective private aid in North Africa and Corsica. Yet the needs will remain the same, and these needs, if left unsatisfied, will become a permanent germ of conflict and discord. Our involuntary neglect of children, for instance, will create innocent criminals against whom the intervention of force and punishment will be employed; whereas the spirit of brotherly love asks only to help them and so bring about an atmosphere of solidarity and mutual aid. Is not that our way toward a better world?

In the general interest, therefore, an adjustment in the existing governmental regulation of American private relief organizations must be made, so that the individual characteristics of organizations may be brought out, their purposes may be more clearly defined, the amount of territory or population they intend to or can cover may be worked out, funds and reserves of supplies accumulated in advance, and a system of publicizing special needs made possible.

This would permit the government to continue to maintain a necessary amount of regulation over assignments of functions and localities, while also enabling private relief organizations to go to the people *now*, with definite plans and purposes, with full faith in their ideals and with concrete knowledge of what they need to accomplish their purpose. In this way our people could build up their own faith, back the moral values which are ours, which we are protecting with arms on the battlefields, which we want to protect with the action of love that is our tradition.

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Communications

TEACHING THE WORKERS

Washington, D. C., April 3, 1944.

TO the Editors: John Cort's timely and forthright appraisal of the successes and failures of existing Catholic labor schools suggests that we haven't yet thought the problem through. As further proof that we haven't, I ask leave to discuss a point which, at most, is only hinted at in Cort's valuable summary. I prefer to take up at the point at which Cort leaves off.

After we have established an ACTU (or its equivalent), what shall the proper function of that organization be? Should it confine itself scrupulously to sustained religious and technical education, or may it properly throw its weight around *as an organization* in correcting local abuses? I am inclined to say that it should confine itself to the former function and hope that those individuals who have benefited from its training will go back to their own milieu and act as enlightened individuals, without benefit of the ACTU (or other) label and without benefit of official ACTU support.

I will be told, I know, that the ACTU cannot fairly be charged with having used pressure as a group. But I remain at least partially unconvinced. I know of more than one instance in which Catholic organizations of the type desired by Cort have officially (if only through the medium of their newspapers) interfered in local disputes in which the issues were not patently as black-and-white as they were alleged to be. We cannot afford to be doctrinaire, even from the best of motives, in dealing with matters which are as complicated as current labor problems admittedly are.

Sooner or later, we must face up realistically to the fact that the ACTU and similar groups are sometimes held in suspicion even among very decent labor groups in certain sections of the country. We can ignore this suspicion; we can ascribe it, if we will, to prejudice or misunderstanding; or we can face it honestly and do our level best to eradicate it. I agree with Cort that it must be all-or-nothing in the realm of principles, but in daily life it can seldom be all-or-nothing in the application of principles. If Catholic organizations, *acting as organizations,* insist in doctrinaire fashion on their solution as the unique solution in the practical application of their admittedly excellent principles, they may expect to be charged with sectarian factionalism. Purely aside from the ingrained fear of factionalism on the part of the leaders of organized labor in the United States, it is obvious that an increase in factionalism in the labor movement would be tragic. It need not be added that religious factionalism would be the most tragic type of all.

In conclusion, may I say that I raise the above point, not in a critical sense, not even as my own final judgment on the subject, but solely with the hope that the discussion may prompt more experienced men to exchange views on a problem which cannot be ignored.

REV. GEORGE G. HIGGINS.

The Stage & Screen

Only The Heart

THERE is, I am sternly convinced, everything to be said for naturalism on the stage, but I don't think I'm the one to say it. Even as a reader of Balzac, I can only get by by hanging on to the book with both hands and hiding the clock so as not to count the minutes; and as far as our theater is concerned, I have always contended that the rehearsal period granted on Broadway is simply not long enough to do justice to work which must be, literally, *grown* in. The American Actors Theatre has evidently been at Horton Foote's play over a period of years, but I am unable to find any significant reason why they should have done so; and must confess that the second-night performance I attended was a poor one, with lines blown six ways for Sunday, or Wednesday as it happened to be. The story is of an avid and predatory mother in a small Texas town in the year 1921 and of her daughter and son-in-law's escape from her. I found the proceedings slow, dull, and dazing; and unfortunately the writing displays the same fault, examined earlier in this column, as that evidenced by the brief "Duke In Darkness." Possibly for reasons of character-emphasis, everyone's lines are repeated over and over again, elongating the play it is true, but giving it to us twice-told: a tiresome system. I must say, after the third or fourth repetition of a speech something like this: "There's no telling what will happen. There's simply no telling. There's no telling, no telling . . ." all one can possibly advise is to bring the curtain down at once, and let everybody go home. With an enormous slice of such dialogue, June Walker, in the part of the mother, gives an exhausting performance, the peculiarity of her phrasing being due, perhaps, to the fact that she breathes in the wrong places. But it was not a rewarding job to begin with. The plum of the evening was secured by Will Hare, playing the young man. As an actor, Mr. Hare is sensitive, appealing and controlled; and this performance puts him, I consider, among the first of the younger men, along with Montgomery Clift, Larry Hugo, and Barry Nelson. I only hope the Army does not snatch him off before he gets his main chance. (*At the Bijou.*)

Mrs. January & Mr. Ex

SOMEONE—G. K. C. I think it was—has repeatedly remarked how little we understand the time of our fathers, how much more we are apt to sympathize with the era of our grandfathers, and even more with that of our great-grandfathers. As a notorious family rebel, I can offer little criticism of the statement, but at least if I find the shennanigans of the older generation amazing though endearing, I do think I have some idea of what they like. And I think it's a pretty safe bet that all my illimitable aunts and all my uncles (mock and otherwise) would have a roaring time at this Zoe Akins farce. Undoubtedly it is a sign of crabbed age and cold defeat to

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admit that I did, too. It is true that Miss Akins (ordinarily considered one of the most skillful smiths on the street) has this time produced a really feeble affair, with little motivation provided the minor characters, and a number of scenes built to a tag-gag in the saddest radio manner; but in her choice of stars—Billie Burke and Frank Craven—she has been more than fortunate, she has been blessed. The attenuated plot gives us an ardent and golden widow, mother to a number of international children, deliberately renting a tumbled New England cottage in order to accustom her timocratic offspring to the exigencies of the coming revolution. Her landlord *happening* to be an ex-President, (a silent Republican—or are they all that way since a week ago Wednesday—), naturally the dénouement occurs when he chooses to run again and the lady is, as she puts it, "elected too" as his wife, his helpmeet, and the not impossible she of his declining years. Romance certainly—rather than history—but with a large amount of wildly feminine political theory thrown in, the whole thing is as big as a minute and not an important one; but it is fun. Pictorially speaking, I thought Paul Morrison's set exact; and while most of the cast has nothing to do, they manage not to bother you doing it. The accepted master of the "telling pause," it is to nobody's wonder that Frank Craven delivers another excellent job; while, on the other hand, there are few words affectionate enough to do credit to Miss Burke's intrepid and ubiquitous playing. I think I liked her best in "one of my little lulls" over a midnight snack of assorted vitamins and cold water, but it's hard to choose; my only criticism being why on earth, in the light of her rainbow performance, she was not called *Mrs. April* rather than anything else. Why and why not? Did nobody think of it? The title should be changed immediately. In any case, in a crescive arrangement of chiffons and frou, she is soft, tender, tireless, and melting; as light as a feather, as mad as a hatter, as meticulously silly as possible. Wizard. Certainly, salutations are in order and here they are. (*At the Belasco.*)

Chicken Every Sunday

I THINK I should like to call this a run rather than a hit, but am glad to report that it looks like a long one. Based on the book by Rosemary Taylor (which I haven't read) it delineates with an especial hilarity the remarkable doings at the Blachman Boarding House in Tucson, Arizona, in 1916. Love, life, laughter and money, one spy, one Indian, two children, an endless number of ghoulies, and the mistress herself, whose home is her Casino, all combine to concoct three acts of what should, I imagine, be called merriment; and I liked it very much. However, as viewed on Thursday, the whole thing did appear a little pavé. There are too many incidents, too many possible laughs, too much stuffing to the chicken; and while it is necessary to commend Lester Vail's over-all direction, I found myself intermittently longing for the fine, finicky Kaufman touch in the staging: business and action, one or two master gestures, far less talk, perhaps fewer people. With no smallest offense intended for Katherine Squire in the part of the long-leggety Lady

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Weird of the piece, I think there is no doubt the play would be better off entirely without her, although I can imagine her character as one of the prizes of the book. Unquestionably the timing of the whole will smooth down with playing, but I still think the job would benefit by cutting, or carving if you will. Every member of the long cast is excellent and I can do little more than mention with gratitude Ethel Remy, Roy Fant, Ann Thomas, Jean Gillespie, especially Hugh Thomas, particularly Viola Dean, and especially particularly Raymond Van Sickle. Playing Emily Blachman, doyenne of the demesne, Mary Philips is physically enchanting and delivers a precise Helen Hayes reading, an attack which seems entirely satisfactory to me. As her hurly spouse, Rhys Williams is so nice and right when he is quiet; I wish he needn't always be the "roaring boy" of the block. Howard Bay's set is appropriately catastrophic, but there is one authentic quibble: the important creak on the stair reached this reporter as a whistle, a moan, an indignant wombat, *anything* rather than a creak on the stair. It needs attention, I think, immediately. Page Mr. Corwin. (*At the Henry Miller.*)

Public Relations

AS BRIEFLY as possible, this is an unpleasant, tasteless, tedious mess, and I do not like to mention anyone in connection with it. However, as the amount of program space devoted to the author—his daily doings from birth until now, his relations, descendants, employers and friends together with names, plus the astounding fact that he has been preparing to write this play about Hollywood all his life—can only indicate that he finagled the copy himself, I rather imagine I am expected to get him down once and for all. The name is Dale Eunson, and as far as I am concerned, it's the chief one in the groan-box from now on. (*At the Mansfield.*)

Bobino

IN THE most crowded week of the "little" season, I was regrettably unable to cover this children's fantasy with music, produced by the Studio Theatre; so had recourse to a trusted friend, Ellen Flynn Bordages. Ellen is six years old and she thought this: "Oh, I thought the Princess was beautiful, and the Lovebirds were too. The animals were all nice, it was mostly about animals really. I loved it but I got tired because it seemed so long. I guess the Giant was called a Middle-Sized Giant because his head and his hands and his feet were so big, but the rest of him—the middle part of him—was just a man. And the three little Girl Pigs that danced at the end were so sweet. I loved them, too. All the children loved the Clown because he talked to them." (*Matinee at the Adelphi, Circle* 6-5097.)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Gay and Girlirious

"ALL RIGHT," says Hollywood, which always keeps on eye on such things and has to be six jumps ahead of public demands, "if the war-laden people want light musical films, we'll give 'em light musical films—as full of froth and pretty girls and gay songs as we can pack 'em." The results are not always as gaysome as the promise, but a glance at the latest and coming musicals reveals one thing: whether in technicolor or black and white, the screen musical concentrates on feminine pulchritude. Whoever is the favorite cover or pin-up girl, be she Grable, Hayworth, Ball, Sheridan, Landis or Raye, it is she who determines to which theater the boys will run. Unfortunately some of the running boys are going to get stung—for the favorite is not always surrounded by the best film. Or maybe, from the boys' point of view, they won't get stung at all, for whatever else these musical films do or don't give you, they *do* give you girls. Since one man's pin-up is another man's poison, let's just get on with cases.

Rita Hayworth fans will flock to *"Cover Girl"* and they will see one of the brightest, shiniest technicolor jobs since "Lady in the Dark." It drips with glamor and satin gloss. It has some nice, singable music by Jerome Kern with lyrics by Ira Gershwin and some beautifully staged production numbers. One of these is ultra-ultra and shows a bevy of stunning models posing in one shot after the other as the cover girls on our leading slick paper magazines. Miss Hayworth, whose figure and face would win a prize in any group, wins the prize. She also does some swell dance numbers with Gene Kelly. What "Cover Girl" does not have, in spite of its long running time, is a story that amounts to anything. It slowly wanders from a Brooklyn nightclub, where Gene is helping Rita along with her career, to Broadway, where Rita is starred in a show after being put through strenuous paces as a cover girl. The script strains painfully and clichéfully with its love-vs.-career formula; and even Gene Kelly, who is a good actor, especially in heel rôles, cannot quite sell himself as the half heel who resents Rita's quick success. Gene's superb dancing, however, particularly in that tricky double-exposure number in which he dances with his own conscience, makes up for some of the plot's dull spots. So does the humor which is handled deftly by Phil Silvers and Eve Arden.

Betty Grable, as you might expect from the ads and publicity releases, is the *"Pin Up Girl"* in the picture of the same name. From Missouri, where she's the darling of the USO, she finally makes her way to Washington, with a stop-over in New York where she meets the sailor of her heart. Our heroine has the kind of face and figure that do not depend on veracity for a successful stage career. However it is a bit disconcerting to have the "Nation's No. 1 Pin Up Girl" be an out-and-out liar. She fibs her way through one situation after the other. The boys might like Grable, and she's the type to stop the show whether her handsome gams are in black silk stockings as in her 1944 version of The Merry Widow number or whether she's wearing a street suit and horn-rimmed glasses or when she sings the sprightly "Don't Carry Tales Out of School"; but a large group of girls are going to resent her dictum on stenographers: "It's no fun just pushing a typewriter, eating drugstore lunches, being a secretary. You're just a nobody. But if you let your imagination go, you can be a lot of things.

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In your mind, I mean." Of course this might all be part of Hollywood's idea of an American pipe dream in technicolor. Before this foolish little story winds up, Cinderella has won her Navy hero, fibs or no fibs. Bruce Humberstone has directed this picture with a fast pace and it has been further pepped up with lively music and colorful production numbers that vary from the elaborate act done by beautiful and fine feathered girls on roller skates to assorted solos put over by Betty Grable and Martha Raye. Hermes Pan, who staged the dances, does a classy little Apache item with Grable which indicates that he ought to be in more of these Fox musicals.

Vera Zorina and George Raft are the central figures in the plot of *"Follow the Boys."* Fortunately its synthetic story, about a couple of movie personalities and the petty quarrel that disrupts their happy married life, does not interfere with the film's good entertainment values. The main point of the picture is the work of the Hollywood Victory Committee which is made up of the men and women from all branches of the industry who appear in camp shows in this country, go on bond tours, entertain our boys overseas. One is impressed with the amount of labor all this involves and the generosity of these people who offer their services and do the drudgery as well as the more glamorous performing. And the surprising thing about this film is that it is in itself so entertaining. This is no doubt due to the thoughtful planning and workmanship of all concerned from Producer Charles K. Feldman and Director Eddie Sutherland right down the line to the minor writers and technicians. Particularly praiseworthy is the quality of the acts. Sophie Tucker, Ted Lewis, Dinah Shore, the Andrews Sisters and Jeanette MacDonald sing, each in his or her own inimitable style. The dance acts are excellent and include Zorina and Raft, Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan, Carmen Amaya. The best of the clowning numbers are done by W. C. Fields, with his droll lecture on billiards, and by Orson Welles, with his magician tomfoolery and sawing Marlene Dietrich in half. Most of these acts give the impression of actually being performed before soldier and sailor audiences. The music, including a lot of good old numbers, is played by leading bands. With such well chosen, wide variety of attractions, "Follow the Boys" becomes a potpourri that has something to please any and every audience.

Kay Francis, Carole Landis, Martha Raye and Mitzi Mayfair are the *"Four Jills in a Jeep."* The picture is based on the experiences of these four girls who actually went on such a tour to entertain our men in England and North Africa. But the film is neither a sincere documentary nor good entertainment. It's done with a superficiality that makes it seem studio-made and we seldom believe that these women are really traveling thousands of miles and are really entertaining real soldiers. Mitzi Mayfair dances beautifully, Martha Raye sings a couple of good numbers, Carole Landis sighs, and Kay Francis acts as mistress of ceremonies. They all have time for romance; Miss Landis even marries her captain in England. The whole affair seems quite a letdown after the lively entertainment in "Follow the Boys"

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which covers a similar theme in better cinema style. In fact the main assets of "Four Jills" aren't cinematic at all: Mitzi Mayfair's dancing, a radio appearance of Betty Grable and Carmen Miranda and the snappy answer that Martha Raye gives when an officious nurse tells her that you can't entertain anybody with your brains knocked out: "Guess you've never been to Hollywood."

Lucille Ball is the glamour girl who meets the people in *"Meet the People."* This is a film with a rather cute idea that somehow fails to come through because Producer E. Y. Harburg didn't want to do an intimate little movie in an intimate little way. It's about a guy in a shipyard (Dick Powell) who writes a topical show about The People. He is horrified at the Broadway rehearsals to discover that his proletarian revue is now dripping with feathers, rhinestones and cheesecake. He snatches his show back to the shipyard where it is finally staged by its erstwhile star (Miss Ball) who left the stage to be a welder and learn about the common man. Although the little revue appears with its feathers plucked, the numbers that turn up in this movie would never be confused with a really proletarian production like "Pins and Needles." Bert Lahr, Virginia O'Brien, Rags Ragland assist the stars with the plot and entertainment. Several of the tunes are fun and so is the satire and social significance stuff, but the picture isn't anywhere near as clever as it should have been.

Ann Sheridan shines on in *"Shine On Harvest Moon."* This saga of early 1900 show business pretends to tell the story of Nora Bayes and Jack Norworth (played by Dennis Morgan) but it is really a theatrical and musical concoction that only vaguely suggests the careers of this famous vaudeville team. Its tedious and corny plot is interspersed with good songs, new and old and a couple really written by Norworth, as is the title song which is done in a manner as inappropriate to 1907 as this scene's sudden burst of technicolor in a black and white picture. Ann Sheridan is lovely to look at and she handles her songs well. However, no one will mistake her for Nora Bayes. Nor will anyone think that Jack Carson, Marie Wilson, Irene Manning and S. Z. Sakall are portraying real, flesh-and-blood people.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

EMMA LAZARUS. SELECTIONS FROM HER POETRY AND PROSE. *Edited by Morris U. Schappes. Cooperative Book League. Jewish-American Section; International Workers Order. New York.* $.50.

FROSSIA. *E. M. Almedingen. Harcourt.* $2.50.

Pride of Birth

EMMA LAZARUS was a descendant of Portuguese Sephardic Jews; she was born in New York in 1849 of wealthy parents, was educated by private tutors, wrote poetry and prose, traveled abroad, was proud of her race and defended her race. Morris U. Schappes has selected some of her poems and extracts from her essays and has written a preface which tells the facts of her short life. She died in 1887. She had discovered Marx and William Morris, but also Emerson and Browning, and possibly Mr. Schappes is inclined to take her socialism too seriously. That was not the point. She discovered that she belonged to a race which needed defending, but also to one of which she could be proud. That was the point. She never found out anything about Catholics or that they had ever been or could ever be anything but the enemies of her people. She is very unfair to Catholics. But that is not the point. One cannot ask everything of everybody. She was generous and courageous and proud of her people. That was enough for her to be at the particular time in which she lived in New York.

She is extremely interesting to American Catholics. For in the eighteen eighties in New York a Catholic would feel as consciously a member of a minority group as did Miss Lazarus. It would have been as unusual for a Catholic, as a Catholic, to write in the *Century* as it was for Miss Lazarus to write in the *Century* as a Jew. Neither Catholics nor Jews belonged to the dominant cultural groups in American intellectual life which had such magazines as the *Century* and the *Atlantic* at their disposal; Catholics and Jews were identified with immigrant bodies. They were very American; they were immigrant Americans. They had come to America fleeing the trials of poverty, hunger or persecution; they had escaped from such terrors that the discrimination they found in America could not lessen their trust in a freedom greater than they had known before.

Both in Philadelphia and in New York there were, exceptionally, Catholics and Jews who, if they wished to, could be as snobbish as anyone else and who, quite naturally, were accepted in the best American society. Too often the trouble was that such people tended to disassociate themselves from those Catholics and Jews—the majority—who were not accepted. They felt that it was not through their Catholicism or their Judaism that they formed part of a society which still drew its inspiration from earlier American days, but through some favored accident of birth. They belonged in America whether they were Catholics or Jews; they belonged in spite of being Catholics or Jews.

Miss Lazarus broke down what might have continued to be a betrayal. She became acutely aware of the fact that it was precisely because of the extraordinary values which had been carried through the ages by the Jewish people that she could make to America a contribution of tremendous worth. That is what the Catholics had to find out also and that is why Miss Lazarus is so interesting to Catholics. It was not because she was born rich and had learned Italian, French and German and could translate Petrarch, Heine and Musset that she could claim a position in the intellectual and spiritual life of our country. It was because she had memories to bring to our country which would be less rich if it had not these memories available—the memories of the Jewish intellectuals of Spain and Portugal, the memories of justice and injustice, the experience of a people which had suffered throughout so many centuries to preserve intact its immense treasures of fidelity.

In 1882, here is a sentence of hers from an essay on Disraeli published in the *Century*: "He knew himself to be the descendant not of pariahs and pawnbrokers, but of princes, prophets, statesmen, poets and philosophers, and in his veins was kindled that enthusiasm of faith in the genius and high vocation of his own people which strikes outsiders as an anomaly in a member of an habitually despised race."

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It was time that American Jews should find their pride again. Emma Lazarus discovered that she could be proud of being a Jew. And this discovery she made in a society which did not know much about Jews—in which the Jews knew little about their own history, in which many Jews were willing to forget what they knew of their own history. And so an American girl, a New York girl who was a Jewess made to the Jews living in America and to Americans who were not Jews, to American Catholics, a most important contribution of knowledge and of pride. Because the worst thing that could have happened to Catholics and Jews in America would have been for them to have forgotten where they came from and to have left behind them, in Europe, and in history, all that they were meant to bring to American life.

Early Soviet Russia

IN RECENT years environment has become increasingly popular as a fiction subject; it is now encountered as often as themes dealing primarily with individuals or with ideas. When E. M. Almedingen published her autobiographical "Tomorrow Will Come" two and one-half years ago, her emphasis was decidedly personal; this time her fictionalized version of the same life story builds up more of a complex, sprawling picture of early Bolshevik Petrograd than anything else. There are characters by the dozen, many of them appearing for the briefest time. Their names are posers for the American reader and without the most careful attention it is difficult to keep them all straight.

What does emerge from this somewhat disjointed if chronological narrative is a strong impression of poverty of the most extreme sort, of iron rule with some attempt at justice, of sustained courage and even of genuine hope. The surviving well-to-do, if they were older, tended to view the Revolution as the end of everything—often to identify it with anti-Christ—but some of the younger ones, such as Frossia, combined a love of Russia with an indomitable will to live. And there were noble women who took it upon themselves to shelter helpless orphans or give their services as hospital nurses. Certain others entered upon the easiest way of assuring themselves a good apartment, enough to eat and often luxuries. But for the most part spacious Petrograd was a city of bones and rags, of the very shabbiest dwellings. Through flood and famine its citizens continued to go out, to exchange visits in crowded slum quarters and even to give parties. The world-famed Russian ballet did not entirely go out of existence.

Frossia does not seem to reach many satisfactory conclusions in the course of her struggle for existence. Her story seems bereft of any other aim. At the end she still loves life and believes in Russia, as she did at the very start. She retains pride in her own personal integrity. One of the most interesting elements in the novel is the series of rather strong characters whom Frossia encounters. One is an extraordinary young woman who conducts revivalist services for the poor, another is her peasant superior, Cherny, who falls in love with her. Finally, a picturesque old artist who goes on with his work regardless of famine or upheaval. She has found no satisfying answer to the riddle of life. This twice-told tale is not as poetic as its non-fiction original; it chief virtue is the picture it painstakingly builds up of Petrograd of the early 1920's.

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STRANGE FRUIT

by Lillian Smith Editor of SOUTH TODAY

Reynal & Hitchcock, New York $2.75

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More Books of the Week

Crazy Weather. By Charles McNichols. Macmillan. $2.00.

THERE IS about this book something of the feeling evoked by your daughter's first evening gown. For there is in it all the confusion and uneasy bewilderment that growing up brings. There is the same unreconciled wish that the freedoms of the young would never be denied. And there is the rediscovered knowledge that growth is not merely pain, but relief from pain.

It takes a great deal of pity and of wisdom and of understanding and of skill to write about the very young. That is why we have "Seventeen," or the Corliss of "Kiss and Tell." For these take the easy way. And it is why, too, we have little about the young who do not yet live in the fumbling awkwardness of the sexual world.

The turbulence, the confusion and the burden of a young boy's soul are too great, too deep and too inarticulate for slick or easy writing. There is a profundity about the clamant thoughts of young boys that the Booth Tarkingtons would never know. There is an honesty; there are whole forts of integrity that refuse surrender. There is a decent reticence that is seldom understood. And there is an absolutism of morality, an uncompromising plethora of beliefs that humble and stun the yielding, the tainted and the adult.

Of these things Mr. McNichols has written with deep understanding. Not only does he deal with the usual ambivalences in a boy's mind; his South Boy is a prisoner to the ambivalence created by living with Indians, thinking the thoughts of young Indians, so that there are times when conflicting mental ways merge and contest and the integrity of personality is broken.

But the real conflict in this boy's mind arises out of parental aspirations and disagreement. South Boy's mother has never adjusted herself to being a rancher's wife. The carelessness, the lack of inhibitions, the natural and manual knowledge which are part of a boy's environment trouble her. She tries to protect him from the knowledge of earth and men, from all the careless, easy freedoms that boys love. And she has built up in his mind such a fear of the imprisonment of schools that his love for her and his fear of system protest for the supremacy of decision.

His father, too, wants to put on South Boy more responsibilities in respect of the ranch. So that the boy, in a sense, is a symbol of all of us moderns, faced by choices between two evils wherein that can be selected which does the least harm. But the boy has a seeming advantage over us who are adults. He can run away; we cannot.

Yet even running away offers little easement. For life compels enforced respect for things and men. And it gets the loneliness that growing respect and maturity bring. Thus South Boy grows into manhood in four days through the swift, ineluctable thrusts of maturity that refuses to let us be anarchistically free, or to go back to the sleep of the womb. FRANCIS DOWNING.

Passport to the War. Stanley Kunitz. Holt. $2.00.

STANLEY JASSPON KUNITZ, is a slight, quiet, man whom every librarian in the country knew as the editor of the Wilson *Library Bulletin*. More generally he was known as coeditor of the series of huge tomes the Wilson company put out, containing the brief biographies of the authors of the past 300 years. And a few knew him as a friend, counsellor and adviser in their writing. He has been less well known as a poet, although his poetry has appeared in the best magazines during the last fifteen years and his first book of poetry appeared about twelve years ago. Two years ago, he shared with MacLeish and Prokosch, *Poetry Magazine's* annual prizes.

Now 39 years old and Corporal Kunitz, he has published his second book of poetry, fifty poems that rather definitely mark him as a major poet. Very catholic in his tastes, many of these poems of Kunitz's exhibit that by now not curious synthesis of the new and the old which one finds in the earlier paintings of Picasso and Matisse, a synthesis to which modern painting, so-called, seems to be returning, and which involves freshness of image and perception but no essential distortion; rather a stressing and renewing of the careful craftsmanship of the older painters.

Thus in many of the poems one encounters subject matter that is strongly or partly sur-realist, but interpreted in forms as classic as those of Frost, Millay or Keats. As in "For Proserpine":

> Preserve you from the long farewell
> Whose sex is flowers, whose breasts are grain.
> Return, return. Into a leafless hell
> Gradually drops the brain.

Or in "My Surgeons":

> My surgeons are a savage band,
> Surely their patient is ill-fated.
> Their tricks are coarse: the small sweet hand
> I seized was wax, or amputated.
> With the humiliated swollen-footed
> And the lost persecuted their traps are baited.

But equally many of the poems are classic in both form and content, particularly those which simply cannot be called anything else but religious. Kunitz, so far as I know, has no religion. So, quite apart from the distinction of the lines, what are we to think when the "unbeliever" writes as follows while the "believers" continue their pale purple burbling in "columns" of "religious" verse:

HE

> He runs before the wise men: He
> Is moving on the hills like snow.
> No gifts, no tears, no company
> He brings, but wind-rise and water-flow.
>
> In meadows of descended day
> His motion leans, dividing air:
> He takes the unforgiving way
> Beneath the apostolic star.
>
> Mary, Mary, call Him stranger,
> Parting the night's long hair, He steals
> Within the heart, that humble manger
> Where the white, astonished spirit kneels.
>
> His vertical inflicting pride,
> Whose shadow cuts the nib of space,
> Bends to this virtue fructified.
> But though he kiss the little face.
>
> Like rapture breaking on the mind,
> The necessary fierce details
> Implacably He has designed.
> Redemption hangs upon the nails.

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I suppose it will be taken as log-rolling if I suggest that this book should win the Pulitzer Prize. So I will merely suggest that it will not win it: if the "modern" parts of it do not disqualify it, the "religious" ones surely will.

HARRY SYLVESTER.

The Shield of Achilles. Horace Gregory. Harcourt. $2.50.

IN A recent volume, Dr. Stoll, the well-known Shakesperian scholar, expressed the wish that the criticism of poetry might be written by poets, rather than by the non-creative; and, to some extent, he has his wish in the work of this nature published by T. S. Eliot, Stephen Spender, and others. Mr. Horace Gregory, who is an American poet of distinction, the author of "Chelsea Rooming House" and other volumes of verse, has now come to the front with this little volume of rather scattered essays, from one on the poetry of Dr. Johnson to one on the author of the Shelburne Essays. It is evident from this description that the book deals exclusively with modern and Romantic poetry, and that in no very comprehensive manner. Though "neither heavy nor pedantic," as the notice on the jacket states correctly, it is scarcely notable for its "coherence," as the same notice adds. Coherence and comprehensiveness can hardly be expected in a volume, some 200 pages long, which darts forward on such unrelated and fascinating bypaths as the prose of Byron, the verse of Thomas Lovell Beddoes, the editorial career of Henley, the Irish work of George Moore and the connection between Wordsworth's immortality ode and "Alice in Wonderland." This last title interested me in particular, since I have an unqualified admiration for both those masterpieces, unshared by Mr. Gregory in so far as the ode is concerned. He says dogmatically that "Resolution and Independence," parodied in the White Knight's Song in "Alice," is "a far better poem than the ode." The essay on Wordsworth and Alice was originally delivered as a lecture, and hence suffers in transcription from that arch, allusive and talk-down-to-them idiom which some lecturers feel bound to give to their expositions in belles lettres.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

Tchaikovsky. Herbert Weinstock. Knopf. $5.00.

MR. WEINSTOCK has with painstaking thoroughness written an excellent detailed biography of Tchaikovsky. It is easily the best life in English of the great Russian composer. Mr. Weinstock is far from reticent about his subject's personal life, and hence his book is perhaps not well suited to immature readers. But with this qualification, candor compels one to admit that it is one of the best biographies of the season.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rural OBSERVER is the pen name of a student of agricultural affairs and a closer observer of the FSA.

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Next Week

OIL, GAS AND MONEY by Dr. Paul S. Stacey suggests a new answer to the oil shortage which threatens the United States in the coming years. His solution is complex. One of the elements is to make more effective the 18,000 "small-time independent drillers." Another is the development of the rich oil fields in Western Canada and other nearby areas, while the latest form of hydrogenation is a third. But the really big potential oil supply lies in our tremendous reserve of natural gas. Revealing, expert information on a leading postwar problem.

THE CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE by Jean C. de Ménasce. This brilliant meditation begins: "Our God is a God of great audacity; He is a loving but not a cautious God. Man is the fruit of this daring love. Human existence is far from an existence of complete repose; and border peoples suffer many blows, for all disputes are finally settled on the fields which they inhabit. Christianity has made our human existence more difficult to maintain. It is still more difficult to be a Christian than to be a man; the Christian can rise higher and fall lower . . . "

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